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TO SAVE YOUR SOLES

Reserve

A broadcast by Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Wallace Kadderly, Radio Service, in the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Thursday, October 15, 1942, over stations associated with the Blue Network.

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MITCHELL (Chicago): Thanks to Ruth Van Deman of the Department of Agriculture, we find out today how to add longer life to leather footwear. These days leather is more important than ever. One way we can all help is take the best possible care of our own shoes. Before getting into that matter here are a couple of questions for Wallace Kadderly to answer. What is the leather situation? Will there be a shortage? For the answers we take you to Washington.

KADDERLY: Well, here are the facts: Before the war, we were importing millions of hides a year. Imports are cut drastically, and demands for leather have increased tremendously. So, unless we're careful to prevent it -- we may be up against a shortage. A shortage of "heavy" leather -- the toughest part of the animal hide.

VAN DEMAN: The part that's used for shoe soles.

KADDERLY: And for harness, scabbards, driving belts for engines. But of course one of the most important uses of all, right now, is soles for the shoes of marching men.

VAN DEMAN: Even sturdy army shoes wear out.

KADDERLY: Yes, and they've got to be replaced. Do you know how a soldier is measured for shoes?

VAN DEMAN: Does he stand on a measuring machine, in his stocking feet?

KADDERLY: Yes. With a 40-pound bucket of sand in each hand. He stands first on one foot, and then the other. The weight of the sand causes his foot to spread, and so he gets fitted with shoes that are just right when he marches along with a pack on his back.

VAN DEMAN: No wonder his feet can take it, on long marches. But I'm concerned about leather for those shoes. With needs for leather so greatly increased, where is it coming from?

KADDERLY: There are just two ways to get more leather. One is to increase the number of animals. That's being done, to some extent, but there's a practical limit. The other way to get more leather is to cut down on the damage to hides. The main injuries come from branding, and from grub holes. Branding causes an average loss of one pair of shoe soles per hide. Smaller brands -- and brands located on less valuable parts of the hide -- would save a lot of leather..... Now the other cause of serious damage to hides is the cattle grub -- the pest that bores holes through the most valuable part of the hide. Every year these pests ruin enough leather to provide 31 million pairs of shoe soles. The answer to that is to control the cattle grub -- and it can be controlled.

KADDERLY: (Continuing) Now Ruth, I've answered those questions Everett asked -- and it's your turn.

The homely, prosaic job of taking good care of shoes may help to prevent a leather shortage. What do the experts recommend, for making shoes last a long time?

VAN DEMAN: In the first place, they recommend daily care. When you aren't wearing your shoes keep them on a rack, in a cabinet, or in shoe bags. To keep that "new" look, good shoe trees are a big help. And get your shoes fixed just as soon as you need new heels and new soles. If you're lucky enough to own two pairs of shoes at the same time, wear one pair today -- the other pair tomorrow.

KADDERLY: Give them a day of rest?

VAN DEMAN: Yes -- a chance to dry and air inside. When you put shoes away for a season, be sure they're in good repair. And put them in a dry, well-ventilated place. You know shoes mildew easily.

KADDERLY: Yes, mildew can play hob with leather. So can a heavy rainstorm, when you're caught without overshoes.

VAN DEMAN: And come home with your shoes soaking wet.

KADDERLY: What should you do? Dry your shoes in the oven? Or on top of the radiator?

VAN DEMAN: Good gracious no! Who ever thought of such a thing?

KADDERLY: Oh -- small boys and girls, in a hurry to get going again.

VAN DEMAN: Well, you'd better teach small boys and girls that too much heat will absolutely ruin a pair of shoes. If shoes are wet, put them on shoe trees to dry.

KADDERLY: What if you don't have shoe trees?

VAN DEMAN: Then stuff the shoes with paper. Keep them away from sunlight, and from heat. Never put wet leather shoes near a stove, radiator, or fireplace. When they're dry, you can soften the leather with a little saddle soap.

KADDERLY: One more question. What do you think about water-proofing work shoes. Isn't that important?

VAN DEMAN: So important I'd like to suggest that people who want simple directions -- for water-proofing work shoes at home -- send for Farmers' Bulletin 1523, called "Leather Shoes, Selection and Care."

KADDERLY: "Leather Shoes, Selection and Care." That just about covers everything... and we thank you, Ruth, for suggesting ways in which we can make our shoes last longer -- and thereby help prevent a leather shortage.